MONTEREY NEWS

April 2015

Est. 1790 Vol. CCXXV · Number 4

The Town

By David Irland

Notes on Select Board meetings from February 23 through March 16.

Police

Kenn Basler, Select Board member, praised Police Chief Backhaus's reverse 911 initiative to date. The chief said that the work involved in getting out snow, travel, and salt information to Monterey residents would be minimal given the data bank of specific messages the department is collecting. According to Chief Backhaus, an officer's smart phone is more than capable of broadcasting any relevant messages to townspeople.

Chief Backhaus introduced Patrick Gonzales, the newest department hire, whom the board unanimously approved for a one-year probationary period. Mr. Gonzales has a solid background in small town enforcement, having come from a part-time position in Hatfield, MA. He also spent twelve years working with the developmentally disabled. In his own words, he is "not a quota or citations guy," but rather works toward "positive contact" with the public. Scott Jenssen sketched out to Mr. Gonzales the wide range of townspeople that will reside in Monterey through the summer months, to which Mr. Gonzales responded that he's well trained in small town sensitivities and perspectives. The board met Mr. Gonzales's introduction with enthusiasm.

Part-time officer Don Hopkins's position was judged to fit the state definition of "sporadic employment," given the variability of his work schedule, an important distinction to the town as the

Steve Graves

Monterey Rink Wrap—It was a historic season for the Monterey rink, with hundreds of skaters and families enjoying the facility. The rink was open continuously for over eight weeks, thanks to the frigid weather, the Monterey Parks Commission, the Monterey Fire Company, and efforts of community volunteers. Over twenty adult pick-up hockey games were played. The annual Monterey community skating party was another success, and the rink was also used for family birthday parties. Weather permitting, and with the help of needed volunteers, the rink will be taken down on Saturday, April 25, at 9:30 a.m. —Steve Graves

Massachusetts Fair Labor Division law requires that anyone steadily employed in multiple departments totaling over forty hours per week is entitled to overtime.

Transfer Station

Once again, transfer station options were put before the board, which seems to be edging toward clarity on the issue. Shawn Tryon, director of operations, reports two basic options: one, rework the current operation to the tune of up to $200,000 (a very rough estimate, Mr. Tryon was careful to note) or two, start over in a new location and do it right, giving the town the opportunity to expand and the flexibility to accommodate the future reality, in which (as Kenn Basler was quick to point out) "trash will become a big issue." The board moved to provide Mr. Tryon with the necessary funds to have a future site study done to facilitate accurate construction estimates.

Highways

Shawn Tryon reported that in one of the major storms this past January, the plowing strategy of leaving some snow in place worked well. He warned, however, that as they warmed up the "white roads," popular with many townspeople, turn to ice, and so it isn't always the correct solution.

Mr. Tryon also discussed an uptick in funds needed for dam inspection and maintenance, due to the Department of Environmental Protection asking in "an aggressive way" for such oversight and remediation. Mr. Tryon mentioned a figure of about $9,000 for ridding the backside of Lake Garfield's dam of bushes and trees, where, by law, there are supposed to be none, as tree roots weaken the dam's structure.

Mr. Tryon also mentioned that about $30,000 more needed is for road maintenance, particularly the gravel roads that haven't been getting the requisite yearly gravel allotment (a situation known as "deferred maintenance"). Mr. Tryon stated that a gravel road typically loses about an inch a year; he further quoted a figure of about $50,000 to put six inches of gravel on a mile of road.

Library Committee

Mark Makuc, library director, typically works well over twenty hours per week, though he is paid for less than twenty. With that in mind, the library trustees, along with the school board, have asked that his position be officially raised to twenty hours, which would entitle him to retirement benefits (7% of his salary per annum) and health insurance. The board was favorable to the proposal overall but felt it should take some time to look at it more closely for any possible impact it might have on the current and future town budgets.

WiredWest

The board heard overviews of the borrowing and bonding process and the infrastructure build-out in anticipation of high-speed internet services finally coming to town. Monica Webb, WiredWest representative, appeared before the board asking it to approve the mass mailing about to go out to all Monterey residents, which would spell details of the proposed broadband initiative. Ms. Webb also mentioned the online sign-up tool available to any interested parties (at register.WiredWest.net). WiredWest requires a 40% of town residences to sign up before it can proceed, which earlier surveys indicated shouldn't be a problem. (As of late March, less than had 20% signed up.) To plan this initiative, it is important to the company to determine the number of "fiber miles" the town would need, and thus it needs to establish the location and number of actual residences, as distinct from barns and outbuildings: a map detailing this information was to be finished soon. The Board suggested that the town assessor will probably be the best source of information if WiredWest still needs assistance.

In a subsequent meeting, representatives of MBI (Massachusetts Broadband Initiative, working with WiredWest) presented "final clarification" of the overall proposal, adding a few details to the picture. The representatives have already held twenty-two similar meetings with local

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municipalities to discuss the the significant debt service related to, in Monterey's case, the approximately $1.9 million bond issue it would be taking on for the project. While the total cost to buildout the network in Monterey is expected to be $2.9 million, MBI will be providing a $1 million offset of total costs, as Monterey's share of a $40 million state broadband grant. Monterey has no bond rating, but it is expected to be able to borrow at approximately 4%. Actual internet service, when it arrives at a hoped-for date of sometime during 2017, is projected to cost an individual subscriber about $45 a month, with a speed of 25 megabytes per second, approximately 23 times faster than Verizon DSL service, and at least 5 times faster than the current satellite service of 4 megabytes per second. Further, there will be no data caps (limits to the amount of data a customer can download per month).

MBI and WiredWest were both careful to note that future customers might want to add to the subscriber fee the extra cost per month of approximately $13.50 in additional real estate taxes due to the bond cost (based on an average $400,000 residential assessment) to arrive at an accurate, competitive comparisons with their current service.)

Landline phone service will cost an estimated $25 per month, though when that service will arrive is uncertain. MBI also pointed out that in a typical current phone bill, customers are charged $14 in so-called "federal fees," which will not apply to service charges from WiredWest—something to take into consideration when making a choice of providers. Eventually, television service will be offered as well, enabling a three-way package of internet, phone and television, for a proposed cost of $130 per month.

Several side benefits of the proposed network were also mentioned. Fast internet service might make possible for a customer to have a mini cell tower (working through the internet connection) in his or her own residence. It was projected that not far off in the future, most television programming will be coming through the internet; that the internet has great potential for home schooling; and that (last and absolutely not least) no young person will purchase a house without decent internet service. Truly high-speed internet access begins to look less like a luxury than a necessity—a claim that happens to be one of the basic WiredWest tenets and selling points. Just recently the FCC determined that high -speed internet is a utility. Internet service has the potential to prevent Monterey from becoming, as one spokesperson called it, "a retirement community."

As a final note, much of the fiber that will be strung through town will be what's called "dark fiber," that is, fiber capacity that is unused until further notice. This capacity is typically sold to outside users such as law enforcement or, for example, Netflix, who could set up a local server for the community rather than rely on a coast-to-coast network to bring their product to market.

Council on Aging

The Council on Aging generously purchased two roll-down movie screens, one of which is to be installed in the town hall, the other at the fire station.

Budget Talks

In light of the minutiae of town budget matters, any person interested in the blow-by-blow of the discussions that took up most of the last four Select Board meetings is invited to access the Select Board minutes at the Monterey town website. (On the home page, navigate to Boards & Commissions, to Select Board, to Meeting Minutes/ 2015.) Also see the Select Board Corner on page 20 for specific financial items propsed for the new town budget.

Life in the Rural Lane

Chief Backhaus reported a loose dog along Cronk Road. The dog was never found despite a quick search response. A car was reported to have disregarded pedestrians and crossed a crosswalk (we only have one designated crosswalk) without slowing, resulting in a verbal warning. A dog was reportedly left unattended at a Monterey residence; the responsible parties were advised to remedy the situation within twenty-four hours or the dog would be picked up. During one of the snowier periods, a car went off the road into a snow bank, though no one was injured in the incident.

Correction: In last month's issue it was stated that the Select Board went into executive session in response to complaints by Rudy Gero over detail assignments. His complaints over detail assignments were dealt with in an open meeting.

—Editor

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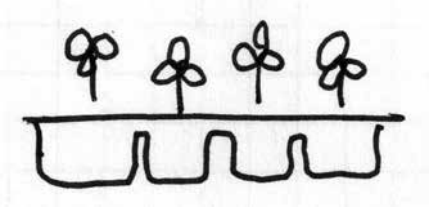


May 5th Town Election Slate

The year's election for town officers will be held on Tuesday, May 5, not on town meeting day. The new day was approved at the 2011 town meeting so that the election would not be disruptive to the meeting. Polls will be open from 12 noon until 7 p.m. at the Monterey firehouse.

Below is the slate for the election. Incumbents are indicated by asterisks.

Contested Seats

Select Board (3 years)
Jon Sylbert (D)
Steven Weisz (R)

Zoning Board of Appeals (5 years)
Susan Cooper (D)
Ian Jenkins (R)

Uncontested Seats

Board of Assessors (3 years)
Donald Hopkins*

Board of Health (3 years)
Roy Carwile

Cemetery Commission (3 years)
Linda Thorpe*

Finance Committee (3 years)
Bill (BJ) Johnson

Library Trustee (3 years, vote for 2)
Beth Reiter*
MaryPaul Yates*

Library Trustee (2 years)
vacant

Moderator (1 year)
Mark Makuc*

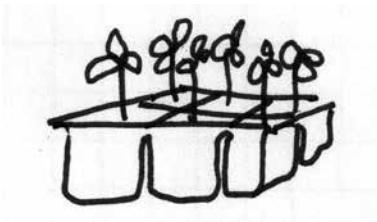
Park Commission (3 years, vote for 2)
Kelly Tryon*
Peter Poirier

Planning Board (5 years)
Stephen Enoch*

Planning Board (2 years)
Pat Soloman

Town Clerk (3 years)
Jennifer Brown*

Tree Warden (1 year)
Winston Wilson*



Candidates' Forum
April 18 at 10 a.m.

On Saturday, April 18, at 10 a.m., the *Monterey News* board will sponsor a candidates' forum for the citizens to examine the two candidates running for the open seat on the Select Board. This will take place in the fellowship hall of the meetinghouse.

The candidates are Jon Sylbert, endorsed by the Democratic Committee, and Steve Weisz, endorsed by the Republicans. The *News* editor, Stephen Moore, will moderate the forum.

The candidates will have opening statements, and then answer questions. First they will address two questions that will have been previously provided. They will then respond to several more questions prepared by the *News*, at which point there will be an opportunity to take questions from the audience. They will be given an opportunity to make closing statements as well.

The forum will also be an opportunity for others running for open positions in town to introduce themselves and, in the case of any contested positions, to make their views known.

As we all know, we're blessed to live in this wonderful town and place, and we're indebted to those who volunteer their time and talents to serve the public good. We're especially blessed this year, given that many towns and municipalities have trouble drumming up people willing to serve, to have two candidates to choose from. So, please take the opportunity of this forum to make your vote an informed one.

See you on the 18th!

—Liz Goodman

Town Election Candidates' Statements

Any candidates who wish to are encouraged to submit statements to the *Monterey News* to be published in the May issue, which will hopefully be available no later than Tuesday, April 28. The deadline for statements is April 15.

MONTEREY LIBRARY

Monday.....7–9 p.m.
Tuesday ..... 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Wednesday .....2–5 p.m.
Thursday .....4–6 p.m.
Friday.....4–8 p.m.
Saturday .. 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
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From the Tax Collector's Office:

The fiscal year 2015 real estate and personal property bills for the fourth quarter will be mailed by April 1 and are due May 1, 2015. If you do not receive your bill, please contact the tax collector's office (528-1443 x117).

Please direct all questions regarding assessments, abatement applications, and personal property taxes to the Board of Assessors, PO Box 488, Monterey, MA 01245 or call 528-1443 x115.

To accommodate taxpayers who want the convenience of paying Monterey real estate and personal property taxes online, an online payment option is available. To pay your tax, you must have your current bill and checkbook or credit card in hand. Log on to montereyma.gov and click on "Pay Real Estate Taxes Online." You will need to enter your current bill number and the current bill year (2015). The bank will assess a minimal fee of $0.25 per transaction. MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards will be accepted. Please note the credit card company will charge the taxpayer a fee for the service. This fee is not assessed by or paid to the Town of Monterey.

—Mari Enoch
Monterey Tax Collector

Monterey Community Center News

Save these dates:

- Saturday, July 11, MCC Super Summer Tag Sale, all proceeds to benefit the MCC—start collecting donation items today.
- Saturday, October 10, Octoberfest 2015, pumpkin roll, bratwurst, beer, fun for all. Volunteers are needed and much appreciated.

We are organizing a slate of spring and summer outdoor programs to include outdoor yoga, a bird walk, painting workshops, botany classes, gardening techniques, and trail building. Details will be announced next month.

Progress on the building was halted for a few weeks due to snow and cold, but with the coming of spring, work is beginning again. Next steps are to construct the soffit and fascia units around the roof edges, mount the gutters, install exterior casings to the windows, install exterior drainage to keep the basement dry, and to install permanent electrical service. Be sure to look on the homepage of our website for the link to the video tour of the MCC, now with walls and windows in place (ccmonterey.org).

Donations are still coming for our capital campaign (see our thank-you to the list of donors on pages 18-19). We are nearly there! We still need about $60,000 more in order to open our doors. With your help we can still do that in 2015; donate online through our website (above) or send checks to Monterey Community Center, PO Box 302, Monterey, MA 01245.

Stop in any time and visit the MCC in its construction mode. Thank you!

—Friends of Wilson McLaughlin House

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Cary Smith
Mike Glier
Susan Dory
Warren Isensee
Steve DiBenedetto
Katia Santibanez
Richmond Burton
Tamara Gonzales
Donald Groscost
JoAnne Carson
Brian Cronin
Roxa Smith
Irena Jurek
Peter Gross

April 4 through May 9, 2015
Reception: Saturday April 4th 5:30 until 7:30
Thursdays through Sundays 11:00 until 5:00 and by appointment
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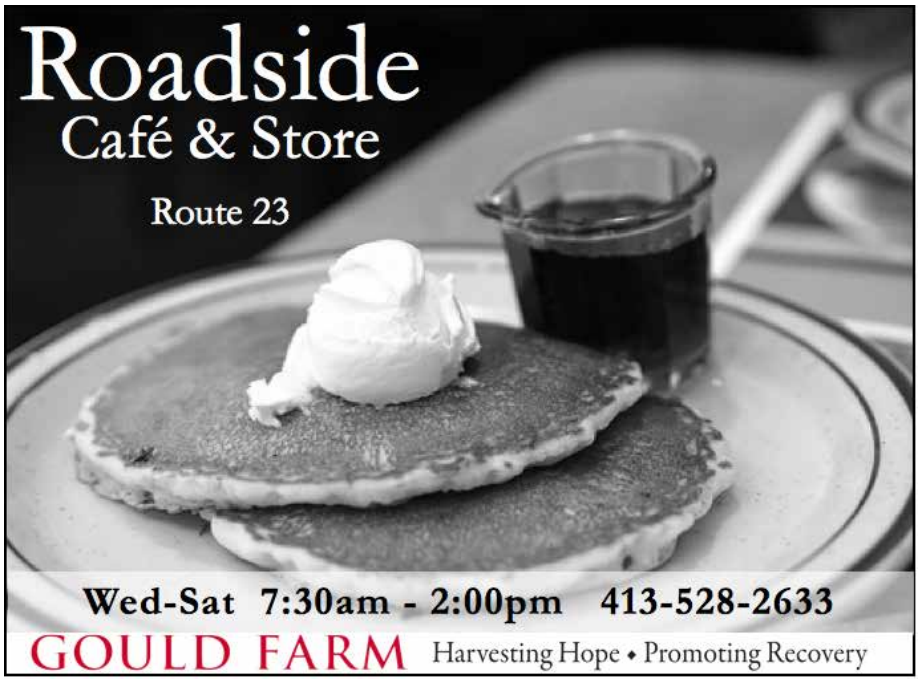

Monterey Library Notes

Feeling wired and tired? Stressed out and exhausted? On Saturday, April 11, at 10:30, herbalist Gale LaScala, from Blandford, will be on hand to offer her "Herbs for Stress" program. Participants will learn how herbs can help with stress and promote a healthy mind and body. Focus will be on common garden herbs and adaptogenic herbs that safely and effectively help. There will be recipes, samples of teas and tinctures, and treats.

Gale has been a practicing herbalist since 1992, has studied with herbalists from all over the world, and has apprenticed at Sage Mountain Botanical Sanctuary in Vermont. She has been a guest teacher at the New England Women's Herbal Conference in New Hampshire. Teaching people how to use herbal medicine and take part in their own health care is the goal of most of Gale's workshops.

The library now has the pass to the Clark Art Institute. As previously mentioned, the pass will only be good for one free admission. Each library will only have one pass, so my prediction is that there will be more demand for this pass than any other item we have. Please remember that the libraries have nothing to do with the rules each institution sets up for their own pass. The Monterey library policy requires that the pass be available on a first-come first-served basis, and must be returned within three days. We ask that you return the pass in the drop box as soon as you get back to Monterey so it is available for someone else. While certain passes can be replaced for a fee, and some are free, a pass won't be available to anyone else while we wait for the replacement, and some of them cannot be replaced. So long as you don't lose them, everyone can benefit.

National Grid has hit all of us in the wallet this winter. I don't know of anyone who is talking about how much electricity they saved or how small their electric bill is. National Grid has donated a device so you can see exactly how much electricity your appliances, lights, and gadgets use. The metering device plugs into any wall outlet into which you then plug your device (toaster oven, portable electric heater, television, vacuum, etc.) to measure its electricity usage. Who would have ever thought a library would be lending such a device out? Unfortunately, many of the electricity uses we would like to know about, such as dryers, electric heat, furnaces, and water and septic pumps, can't be plugged into this meter.

On Sunday, April 5, at 1 p.m., the library will be the site of the annual egg hunt sponsored by the Coffee Club, the Friends of the Monterey Library, and with the help of the Monterey police. Last year we hid over five hundred eggs! Please be early, because those eggs get snatched up fast. Snow, mud, or maybe we'll get lucky and have a nice spring day—however it is, we hope to see you here!

—Mark Makuc
Library Director

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Council on Aging

The trip to Hyde Park on April 6 has been cancelled. Not enough people signed up.

Our next outing, "Off Your Rocker," will be on Tuesday, April 28, at noon. We will be having lunch at the Farmington River Deli in Otis. Please let Maryellen Brown know if you'll join us. Call her at 528-1598 or e-mail her at mbrown007@earthlink.net by April 20.

Berkshire County and other parts of the commonwealth are looking at the needs of our aging populations. Many groups in the county are involved in planning. If you are fifty years old or older, full or part-time resident, please take part by filling out the survey at: surveymonkey.com/s/BerkshireAgeFriendly. If you prefer a paper form there will be some on the information table in the town hall lobby.

—Kay Purcell

Transfer Station Summer Hours

Sunday	10 a.m.–6 p.m.
Wednesday	8 a.m.–1 p.m.
Saturday	8 a.m.–1 p.m.

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April at the Knox Gallery

SPACE-out-LINED: Paintings and Photographs, by Meryl Wilen-Greenfield, will be on exhibit for the entire month of April, through May 2. Please come in to see it!

A part-time Monterey resident since 1986, Wilen-Greenfield received a BA from Smith College in 1956 and a Masters in City and Regional Planning twenty years later from Rutgers University. She began studying at the Art Students League in New York City after first exploring painting in a class at IS 183, and has never looked back.

More recently, she began photographing images as an adjunct to her studies of abstraction, and through both mediums she strives to simultaneously establish a sense of movement and stillness in the open space created in her images. Working with a limited palette, disregarding the idea of perspective, she strives for an illusion of movement and balance. Her geometric forms in undefined space evoke reality along with the unreal, form against formlessness, the known versus the imagined. Perhaps her urban planning background has woven its influence into the space, form, and illusion of her work. The artist asserts, "For me, abstraction is a reflection of the real world."

Tailored: Stitched, Patched, Threaded, & Pinned by painter Dee Shapiro, follows Wilen-Greenfield's exhibit, opening on May 8, with a reception the next evening, Saturday, May 9, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Dee Shapiro developed and curates this exciting group show, which features works by artists who use the tools and techniques of tailoring to create unique works of art. Shapiro will talk briefly at 6:45 p.m. at the opening reception.

All exhibits can be viewed during library hours. Knox Gallery, Monterey Library, 452 Main Road, Monterey, MA. 528-3795. Facebook.com/Knox Gallery. @Knox_Gallery on Twitter.

—MaryPaul Yates

Above: Rotunda
Below: Self-Portrait
Both photos by Meryl Wilen-Greenfield

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Route 23 Monterey

Of the Meetinghouse

I'm taking a break once again from writing my "Who's Who" column because I want to tell you about the meetinghouse and its capital campaign.

But before I do, I need to begin with a word of thanks.

People have shown such generosity in response to our appeal—people with recent experience of the meetinghouse, people with long-ago experience, and people with no experience other than an appreciation for the beauty of the building and the church's task of keeping it not only open but also welcoming, an asset to the town and county.

I want to thank the people from all over town who've responded to the appeal, and I want to thank people from as far away as California and Oregon. I want to thank the couple that was married here in 1961 and sent us a donation in appreciation of that long-ago yet on-going event. I want to thank those who've given from family foundations and in memory of loved ones. I want to thank each of the ninety-seven households from whom we've received gifts. And I speak not only on behalf of myself, but on behalf of everyone at church and, I imagine, everyone in town.

The Meetinghouse at 65% "painted." (drawing thanks to Bob Horvath)

Because of all this support, we've raised $40,000 in just four months. Combining this with the $25,000 we're withdrawing from our endowment, we're over halfway to our goal of $100,000.

Now to the appeal: if you haven't yet given to this effort, please consider doing so.

Here are some facts that might guide your consideration. We're a congregation with twelve formal members, which, if you know your Bible, portends great things. But it also means that it comes down to so small a group to oversee the maintenance of this building that, though privately held, is public in its impact. Of course, our worshipping congregation is, these days, over twice that size—closer to thirty. But, even still, this is a lot of responsibility for just a handful of individuals.

It's not an exaggeration to say we can't keep the building as it should be kept on our own.

It's also not an exaggeration to say that we are deeply committed to keeping the building in the sort of shape that so lovely a town as Monterey deserves.

Please help us do so.

The scraping will begin soon. The painting will take place after that. The steps and the ramp will be addressed in the summer. But please don't assume that, because the workers are at their task, we must have reached our goal. We're a ways away from that at this point. We're beginning the work before the fundraising is complete. We're thinking of it as a leap of faith. Please join us in it.

If you'd like to make a gift, write a check to the Monterey UCC, write in the memo line, 'Meetinghouse Capital Campaign," and send it to PO Box 182, Monterey, MA 01245. Thank you!

—Liz Goodman

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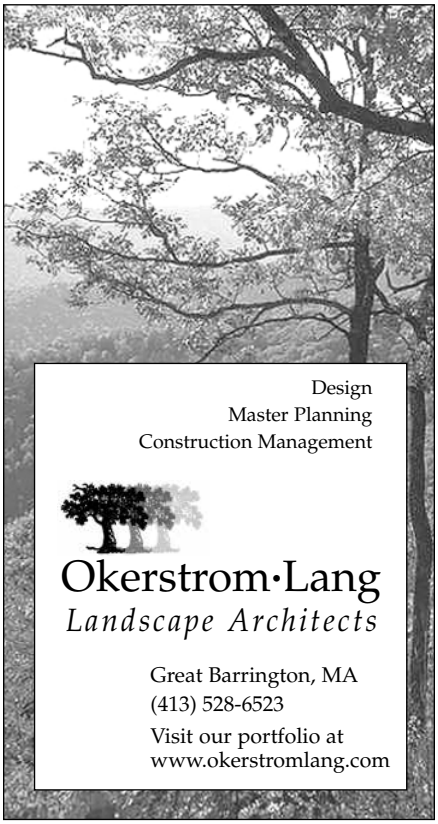
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Monterey School
REGISTER FOR THE 2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR
Kindergarten: This program is for children who will be 5 years old before October 1, 2015.
Early Kindergarten: An early kindergarten program for children who turn age 5 between October 1, 2015 and May 1, 2016. These are both full-day programs.
Call Rose Glaszcz at 229-8754, ext. 377 or email rglaszcz@sbrsd.org to set up a time to visit the school.

Adult's Book Group

Monday, April 27, at 7:30, the book group will discuss *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand. Upcoming books are *The Faithful Wife* by Sigrid Undset in May and *Being Immortal* by Atal Gawande in June. All are welcome.

—Ann Canning

Children's Book Group

Saturday, April 11, at 7 p.m., the group will discuss two books: *Navigating Early* by Clare Vanderpool, and *The Candymakers* by Wendy Mass.

—Nadia Makuc

Calling All Softballers!

A new season is upon us after a long winter, which should make you itch to get out on the diamond. Weather and field conditions permitting, we hope to start playing April 19 (or the next decent Sunday). The season extends into October. Warm-ups will start at 10:30 and game time at 11 for spring and fall games. During the warmer months, game time is 10:30, warm-ups at 10. Rubber baseball cleats are highly recommended. All games are at Greene Park behind town hall on the north side of Route 23. See you soon.

—Michael Joutras

Community Potluck Supper
April 15

A very enthusiastic crowd greeted the update presentation on the Monterey Community Center. What changes! The building is enclosed, thanks to very difficult work in January with freezing temperatures—many thanks to Joe Baker, Michael Banner, and Eric Pedersen and crew. It was great to hear about the plans for the summer and the rest of the year. Watch for the Community Center's tag sale July 11 and the Octoberfest weekend.

For the next potluck, we have Monterey Police Chief Gareth Backhaus and Community Policing Officer Sergeant Mike Johnson presenting a program on identity theft, which is a problem that affects all of us. We urge you to attend this important program.

The next Monterey community potluck dinner will be held at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, April 15, at 6 p.m., in the fellowship hall of the Monterey meetinghouse. Please bring a dish to share with a serving utensil and a place setting and silverware for yourself. Everyone is welcome.

—Barbara Dahlman and Kyle Pierce

Local Author David Shifrin
Shamelessly Hustling His Books

Hello to my friends in Monterey. You may remember me from my short stories that were featured in the Monterey News. It's been four years since I sold my place on Lake Garfield, and I still miss that incredible water view as well as the delightful coffee club sessions in the church basement.

Many of you know that I've had two books published. Although currently out of print, they are now available as e-Books on Amazon and Barnes & Noble, both priced at $4.95.

The first one, *The Hamlet Experiment,* is a medical thriller about a brilliant young female doctor who conducts a bizarre, unauthorized medical experiment on a man in his thirties. This results in the death of her subject, and the story begins with a trial scene at the Boston courthouse where she is on trial for murder. I think you will find this a can't-put-it-down read, and it may challenge you to reconsider your personal philosophy about medical ethics.

The second book, *Ob-Gyn Confessions: Intimate Stories from a Woman's Doctor*, is a collection about experiences I encountered during my thirty-five year career. The stories range from an incident where I lied to a husband about who fathered his wife's child, to an outrageous lawsuit, to a breech delivery that was so frightening that I temporarily lost consciousness.

If you read either or both of them, I would appreciate your feedback at mikejosh18@aol.com. Best wishes to all of you in the most delightful town I've ever known.

—David Shifrin

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Mt. Everett's Robotics Team
World Championships, St. Louis

Mount Everett's robotics team #3085, the Higgsbots, including Justin Makuc from Monterey, competes every year in the First Tech Challenge (FTC) which is part of the larger organization, FIRST. After several meets within the state, they qualified for the FTC state championship in Natick. On February 28, the Higgsbots went undefeated in the qualifying matches and held first place going into alliance selection. They chose the Gear Ticks, from Lincoln, and Team Enginuity, from Lenox, to accompany them in the championship matches. The alliance, captained by the Higgsbots, dispatched the fourth-seed alliance in the semifinal round to make it to the championship round. The Higgsbots then went on to win the championship round in two matches and clinch the state championship for the third time in three years. Along with the championship, the Higgsbots earned the Rockwell-Collins Innovation Award and were runner-ups for the Inspire Award.

As a result of their state championship, the Higgsbots earned an invitation to join the best seventy-two FTC teams from twelve eastern stateinat Scranton, PA, for the East Super Regionals. The seventy-two teams were split into two divisions, Hopper and Tesla, each containing thirty-six teams. During the qualifying rounds, the Higgsbots went 7-2 to earn the rank of third in the Tesla division. The Higgsbots then joined an alliance with the first and eleventh ranked teams. This alliance won the division semifinals and then won the Tesla division finals to become division champions. The alliance then lost to the Hopper division champions afterthree3 hard-fought matches.

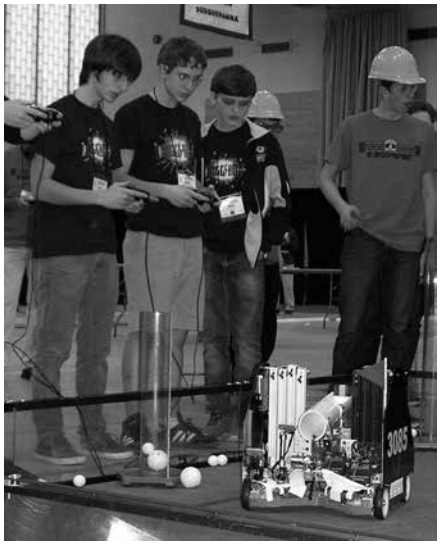
Due to their division championship title, the Higgsbots have been invited to the FTC World Championship to be held in St. Louis on April 22 to 25. The World Championship will consist of 128 teams advancing from international and U.S. super-regional competitions. There are more than 4,500 teams that compete in the FTC, so the Higgsbots have defied the odds to make it to this final competition.

Mark Makuc

L to R, standing: Mr. Casivant, Michaela Loring, Max Lowenstein, Sam Webb, Nikos Casivant, Alex Dunn, Ben Webb, Mr. O'Brien, Patrick Hogelin, Mr. Thompson, Kneeling: Justin Makuc, Jordan Chretien, Jake Christinat, Kosta Casivant

To travel to St. Louis at the end of April, the team will first have to raise at least $10,000. They are selling energy-saving LED lightbulbs. Using only 9.5 watts to emit light equivalent to that of a 60-watt incandescent lightbulb, these dimmable bulbs use 84% less energy than an incandescent light bulb and have a life-expectancy of twenty-two years. The cost of one bulb is $10, of which $8 goes to the benefit of the trip to St. Louis. Donations will also be welcome. For bulbs, call Justin Makuc at 528-5834. Checks can be made out to "Project E-." Any support you can give this team to make this trip a reality is greatly appreciated. Visit ftc3085.net or www.usfirst.org. to learn more.

— Justin and Marya Makuc



Christine Christinat

Team #3085 and their robot

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Project Native Film Festival
April 11 and 12

What do food, filmmakers, family, and free have in common? They are all important aspects of the fifth annual Project Native Film Festival.

On the weekend of April 11 and 12, eight award-winning environmental films will be shown free in Great Barrington as part of Project Native's film festival.

On Saturday, April 11, at 7 p.m., there will be a special screening of *Just Eat It: A Food Waste Story* at the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center. The directors and subjects of the film will conduct a question and answer session following the film.

On Sunday, April 12, seven award-winning environmental films will be shown at the Triplex Cinema in Great Barrington. The day will begin at 10 a.m. with a wonderful family program. Children and adults alike will enjoy watching *Deepo—A Fish Story* and *Watermelon Magic*. Both films will be presented in 3D. Older children and adults can learn about a variety of current environmental topics while watching *Extreme Realities*, *Open Sesame: The Story of Seeds*, *Oil & Water, Angel Azul*, *Cowspiracy,* and *The Human Experiment*.

"We expect this festival to be the biggest and best yet. If people don't leave the theater more educated, inspired, or motivated to act, then we are doing something wrong," says Karen Lyness LeBlanc, education and outreach coordinator for Project Native. Fortunately, festival history has proven otherwise.

"These films stir up emotions and we hope these emotional responses propel people to act," says LeBlanc. If people leave a film inspired to do something, festival organizers want to help connect those individuals with a local organization working on similar issues. With this in mind, local nonprofit organizations are invited to participate as underwriters. Representatives from underwriting organizations are invited to introduce the films and set up a table in the lobby to share information about their organization. The following underwriting organizations will be present at the festival: CHP, B.E.A.T. (Berkshire Environmental Action Team), Berkshire Grown, Berkshire Node of 350 .org, Flying Cloud Institute, and Berkshire Voters for Animals.

The staff and board of Project Native believe no one should be excluded from this educational event for financial reasons. For this reason, since its inception, the festival has been offered free of charge. This would not be possible without support from the Dr. Robert C. and Tina Sohn Foundation and official sponsors: Berkshire Coop Market, GoodWorks Insurance, Kenver Ltd., and Bobbie Hallig.

Visit projectnative.org/Film_Festival for more information.

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The Thrilling Barred Owl

Some time back William Brewster was camped at a wilderness lake. This was 1897, and Brewster was an ornithologist. In those days the way many people got a closer look at a bird was by knocking it off with a gun and then examining it closely, even stuffing it. The study of life, biology, depended upon death, often followed by taxidermy. I've read that one of Brewster's close boyhood friends was Daniel French, later a great sculptor, who gave Brewster his first lessons in taxidermy when they were both about ten years old.

French was not along for the trip to Lake Umbagog years later, far up on the New Hampshire–Maine border. Brewster was there with a guide, and wrote this:

"Those of us who slept under canvas last night at the camp on Pine Point were suddenly awakened, about midnight, by outrageous squalling, snarling, and growling, coming from somewhere close to the tents and exactly like that of a tomcat engaged in nocturnal strife, but much louder. This outcry was exceedingly startling because of its nearness, and of the perfect stillness of the night."

He goes on to say that it was "closely similar to an outburst of cat-like yelling which, several years ago, suddenly disturbed not only the serenity of a calm autumn evening, but also the peace of mind of some sportsmen whom I happened to be visiting at the time at their camp on Moll's Rock. For these men insisted on attributing the cries to a cougar, said to be then roaming the forests about the lake." And then, "a prolonged and cat-like scream rang out from among the stubs near Moll's Carry. Although coming from a distance of nearly half a mile, this outcry was so loud, so piercing and so expressive of ferocity as to be very thrilling. It ended, however, with a hoarse hoo-ah which could issue from no throat other than that of a Barred Owl."

Here in Monterey we have heard Barred Owls this past month, giving their signature eight-part "who coks for you, who cooks for you," followed by "who cooks for you-all," which is that final hoo-ah of Brewster's account. Some folks have been lucky and seen the owls, tall and dark, perched upright on a branch. (See photo on page 22.) Edward Howe Forbush, state ornithologist of Massachusetts years ago, gives this account of the "courting antics" of a pair of Barred Owls by moonlight and firelight in the month of March, "at one of my lonely wilderness camps."

"Perched in rather low branches over the fire they nodded and bowed with half-spread wings, and wobbled and twisted their heads from side to side, meanwhile uttering the most weird and uncouth sounds imaginable. Many of them were given with the full power of their lungs . . . while others were soft and cooing and more expressive of the tender emotions; sounds resembling maniacal laughter and others like mere chuckles were interspersed here and there between loud wha whas and hoo-hoo-aws." Forbush also quotes a wonderful description from the journal *American Forestry* of 1919. Someone had a Barred Owl for a pet and wrote that when it slept it "squats down upon its perch and allows its head to hang way down below it, for a distance of at least ten inches or more." (R.W. Shufelt, *American Forestry*, Vol. XXV, p. 941).

These big owls are common here, and this is their nesting season. They like to find a hollow tree but will settle for the old nest of a hawk, a squirrel, or a crow. There are two to four white eggs, which hatch after four weeks. Little owls are dependent nestlings for nearly two months. When they first hatch, their eyes are closed for a week. The nest is likely to be twenty to eighty feet above the ground. The parents bring food and rip it into pieces for the young ones, feeding it to them one piece at a time. During these early weeks the young owls can't yet fly, but they may leave the nest. They can climb from the ground up the rough bark of nearby trees to perch safely on upper branches. They are strong and expert climbers, using their beaks and talons and spreading their wings

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out against the trunk. They can go up fifty feet in twenty minutes. (This account is in *A Guide to Bird Behavior*, Vol. III, by Donald and Lillian Stokes, Little Brown and Co., 1989.)

Once they are able to fly, the young owls follow their parents and roost near each other. By sometime in the fall, they are hunting for themselves. Those biologists who study with the help of the shotgun have looked at the stomach contents of Barred Owls and report that they eat various rodents including mice, also lizards, fish, insects, spiders, birds, and even crayfish. In 1890 a British ornithologist, Lord Lilford, studied the mouse-consuming capacity of a Barn Owl. He offered many mice to an owl and found the bird took nine without hesitation, swallowing them all whole except for the tail of the ninth, which hung from the owl's beak. Three hours later the same owl was ready for four more mice. Lilford did the math and concluded that a family of seven Barn Owls in one night of good hunting would eat more than 150 mice, or their nutritional equivalent in rats gophers, moths, beetles, snakes and so on.

Some of our more modern biology statisticians will have carried these calculations right out into the left field of economic benefits, based on grains of wheat per mouse per owl per night. I think these scientists leave their shotguns at the door when they enter their cubicles, which is easier on the owls, if not the mice. I hope, also, we students of life can get out in the moonlight and listen for the outrageous squalling, the maniacal laughter, the cooing, and the mere chuckles of our local Barred Owls.

—Bonner McAllester

From the Meetinghouse
Darting Birds

"The ducks are crossing the street!" Liz exclaimed. The other three of us in the room turned and stared through her office window. That window faces onto Main Road to offer a view of the general store and the post office, the roof of the old Tryon tea house, then further west toward town hall and uphill toward the fire station.

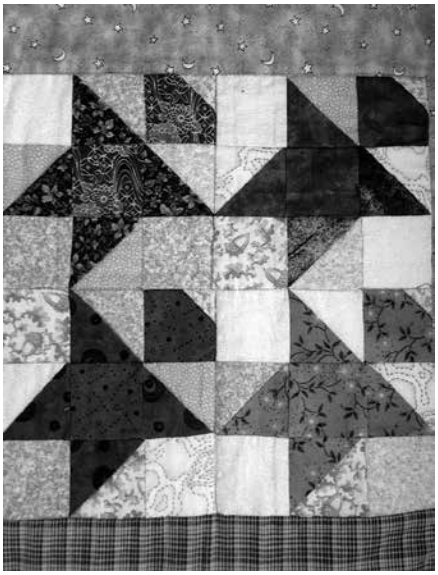
It was only the ninth of March, still technically winter, even in those years when winter was one of Mother Nature's mild afterthoughts. Since, as we're all too aware, this hasn't been one of those years, the duck parade was especially happy news.

A dozen ducks waddled across the center line on Route 23 toward the post office parking lot. The driver in a car heading east stopped to honor their passage. After they were safely across, she parked in front of the post office.

We still watched from the window, expecting to see the flock scale the snowplow mounds that separated the parking lot from the riverbank. Instead, they emerged from under the bed of a pick-up parked in the lot.

The ducks seemed flustered as they gathered in a loose circle. The lead duck looked at the mountains of snow where the downhill way to the river was supposed to be, then waddled purposefully back into the road. The others streamed behind.

The driver who'd shepherded them across a few moments before was about to step into the post office when she realized what they were doing and that a car was heading downhill directly toward them.



Mary Kate Jordan

This traditional quilt square is called Darting Birds.

She ran into the road, too, and stood in the street, waving her arms at the oncoming driver. Message received, the driver of that car, too, waited for the flock to pass. The first driver headed back to the Post office smiling, shaking her head.

Thank you, both drivers. As we say around here about the folks in Monterey, "it's the people that make the place."

The people, indeed. And, more recently, "our" ducks.

—Mary Kate Jordan

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Native American Spring
The People of the Dawn

In the years that I was growing up during World War II on a dairy farm in southern Rhode Island, I was taught the spiritual meanings of spring from a local Narragansett Indian, Elwood Young. He asked for work on the farm so he might walk in the footsteps of his ancestors on their hunting and fishing grounds along the meandering banks of the Potowomut river. When his father died, his grandfather, a full-blooded council elder at the Narragansett Indian Church in Charleston, RI, had adopted him. When my father was reported missing-in-action with the Air Force, Elwood in turn adopted me in the usual ritual of a blood-brother ceremony, in case my father did not come home, or until he did. Adoption was common in most native cultures.

The Narragansett Indians are descendants of aboriginal people in Rhode Island with archeological evidence going back 30,000 years. When Verazzano visited them in 1524, they were a large tribe under powerful kings, dominant in the region, protecting smaller tribes such as Nipmucs, Wampanoags and Niantics who paid them tribute. Until recently they had their own newspaper, *People of the Dawn*, named for what they called themselves. Now they have their own website.

In1636 Reverend Roger Williams purchased land rights from the Narragansett sachems to establish religious freedom in what he called Providence. That same

Monterey News file photo

year he published a book, *A Key into the Language of America*. His controversial premise was that the ancient roots of their language proved they had undisputed rights to their land, which could not be taken without due process of law. He did not consider them an inferior race, nor tried to convert them from their religion, even though their beliefs were different from his own. They had many gods including the rising sun, lunar relationships between heaven and earth, and seasons of the moons.

The Narragansett historically had two homes—a longhouse in the winter for twenty families together for the cold months, and the smaller Algonquin wigwam for summer, for individual families. David McAllester, who also had a Narragansett connection, built the Algonquin wigwam with me behind the Bidwell House Museum in 2005. (See the photo at left.)

On our dairy farm alongside the Potowomut river, when we did spring plowing, the turned soil revealed traces of clam shell mounds where the shells had been regularly tossed out the lodge door after feasting. The Indian meaning for *potowomut* was "evening reflection of many campfires upon the waters."

Now, with the coming of spring, the first promise of renewal along the river banks will be the blossoming of the shadbush to welcome the return of the anadromous herring and shad as they come past out of the ocean to spawn in the freshwater pools of their origins. The nearby Wampanoags, who similarly called themselves People of the Rising Sun, taught the Pilgrims how to plant a fish for fertilizer in each hill of the three sisters. Chief Massasoit's friendship helped the Pilgrims survive starvation during the first winter, as well as the threat of

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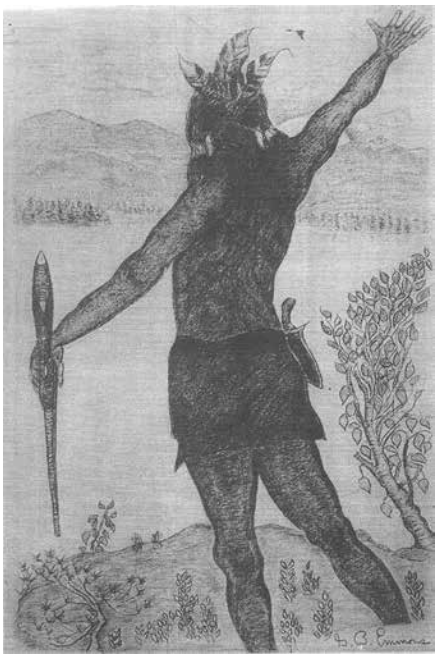

The original of this drawing was shown in the Kennedy Art Gallery, and was drawn for an article about spring in 1975. George sold the original in 2014 at his show here in Monterey.

attack with the chief's pact of Narragansett protection. This mutual cooperation for the survival of the plantation led to the native autumnal feast of friendship we still celebrate today as Thanksgiving.

Following the Indian belief that life on earth was a continuous circle of seasonal cycles, when spring turned into summer, my mentor's grandfather would take us clamming after church near Quonset Point Naval Base with other members of the congregation. It was there the quonset hut was developed for military housing very similar to the Algonquin longhouse. After a day of digging clams and catching crabs and lobsters, we baked them over a fire on the beach with potatoes and ears of corn under a layer of seaweed.

Seated around in a circle, ancient songs and storytelling spoke of how the stars in the sky are the campfires of the dead. Holding the traditional native belief in re-incarnation the Narragansett were not afraid to let the sun go down. In the days ahead, near the end of the war, my father did come home.

Hail to the light of Native American dawn
As the spirit of life on Earth is re-born.

—George B. Emmons

Of Pen And Syrup

A sugar maple tree is a writer. Year after year, seasons pass and different colors adorn the tree and the surrounding forest as life blooms, births, feeds, migrates, and dies all around it. The writer drifts through the stages and experiences of life.

At the first sign of springtime—when the northeastern forest freezes by night and thaws by day, and the forest floor is still white and the deciduous canopy brown, interrupted only by the sporadic green patches clinging to branches of firs and pines against the cobalt sky of a sunny day, sap flow begins. Imagination and curiosity fill the writer's mind, but self-doubt suppresses his urge to express himself.

The bark conceals the activity beneath its surface until a galvanized tap punctures the tree's skin and teardrops trickle forth. A fleeting wave of confidence persuades the man to grasp a fountain pen, which is all that is needed to connect mind and paper.

The watery sap is diverted from its course up through the trunk towards the tips of the branches, weeping into the bucket that hangs below the tap—hardly distinguishable in appearance, temperature, or flavor from the snowmelt that swells the engorged stream nearby. A thin trail of ink flows onto paper from the nib of the pen as chaotic synaptic firings send instructions down the muscles in his arm to choreograph a precise dance of his hand and wrist to form the shape of letters, placed in sequence to form words, which meld into sentences.

The bucket is collected and brought to the sugar shack to be poured into a large vat, where the liquid boils, thickens, and concentrates until it becomes a sweet, sticky, golden-amber syrup, completing the transformation. The writer pares and winnows his words until he punctuates the final sentence with a dot.

Years later, the wound from the tap is found to have formed formed a beautiful stain in the otherwise run-of-the-mill lumber. The timeless transcription textually transcends the writer's own life.

—Dave Wisotsky

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Conservation Commission
Important Steps for Your Project

With the long-anticipated arrival of spring finally here, residents and visitors are looking forward to enjoying the bounty of recreational and nature-related pursuits that Monterey has to offer. Among them, boating comes to mind as homeowners begin to ready their docks. As the melting snow and seasonal rains contribute to the annual reawakening of Lake Garfield and Lake Buel, it is important to remind everyone of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requirements for docks and similar structures. In this article, the terms *dock* and *pier* will be used synonymously. The following is a summary of the DEP requirements.

Referred to as Chapter 91 (M.G.L. c.91,18c and 310 CMR 9.29), these regulations apply to small docks and piers that are noncommercial and water-dependent (which are structures providing direct access to vessels alongside, and generally apply to larger public or commercial projects), and are accessory to residential use. The purpose of Chapter 91 is to promote and protect the public interest in coastal tidelands, navigable nontidal rivers and streams, and great ponds such as Lake Garfield. Furthermore, the regulations strive to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare; to foster the public's right to clean air and water, free of excessive and unnecessary noise; and to further the enjoyment of the natural, scenic, aesthetic, and historic attributes of the surrounding environment.

Dennis Lynch

The Chapter 91 statute imposes jurisdiction over dredging, the burning of rubbish on waterways, the placement or removal of fill or unconsolidated materials, the lowering of the water levels of great ponds, and the placement, construction, or alteration of any permanent or seasonal structure. Prior to undertaking these activities, which are listed in 310 CMR 9.05(3) (a)-(m), the DEP must be notified of the project. After review of the activity or project, the DEP will provide written notification as to whether or not a Chapter 91 license or permit is required. When approved, a DEP Certificate must be recorded in the Registry of Deeds and presented to the Monterey Conservation Commission and/or the Building Department prior to performing the work. The Conservation Commission also requires the submission of a Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) before approval is given for the project.

The DEP may issue a license or permit in one of several different categories, depending on the nature of the project. A Chapter 91 simplified or general license is required for a small dock or structure in a great pond, such as Lake Garfield, and in navigable rivers and streams. The structure must not exceed three hundred square feet at the ordinary high-water mark, not exceed four feet wide, be a minimum of five feet above the mean high water mark with three-quarter-inch plank spacing, and have no fill material involved in the construction. The height of the pier is required to permit sufficient light penetration for the underlying aquatic vegetation. A Chapter 91 waterways permit is also required for projects that do not involve construction or any work on structures or fill material. In this category, the following activities are included but not limited to: dredging, beach nourishment, below-water disposal of unconsolidated material, burning of rubbish on waterways, and lowering the water level of Lake Garfield. Both the waterways license and waterways permit may also be amended for the following reasons: renewing a license term, delineating a so-called

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POB 9
Cover-up!

As many of you know, I have been a resident of Monterey for forty years, served on several appointed and elected committees and positions, and have been a part-time police officer for fifteen years. I have always performed the duties of a police officer professionally and courteously and been rated "Exceeds Expectations" in every category of my performance evaluation.

I would like to respond to the statement the Select Board submitted in this month's issue of the *Monterey News* (See page 21). This letter was written by Ken Basler and the police chief and it was not unanimously voted to be submitted as written. Since it refers to me in a discrediting matter, I would like to set the record straight.

1. I did not bypass the established chain of command. I met with my superior and voiced my issues and when they were not addressed I went to the next level, the Select Board. Serving three years in the US Army and obtaining the rank of sergeant, I know the proper use of the chain of command.

2. The comment made in the town hall was not inappropriate. Telling someone, "You clean up nice when not in uniform," is in no way sexual harassment and was not taken as such, as documented by the two female employees present. It was only construed as sexual harassment by a superior officer who I feel has delusions of grandeur and was used to discredit me. Having been in upper management at Kimberly Clark Corp. and then at Schweitzer-Mauduit Intl. Inc. for thirty-three years, and having taught classes on sexual harassment, I know what constitutes grounds for sexual harassment charges. The Select Board statement, "because of the potential seriousness of such a charge, the Select Board brought in town counsel to monitor and review this new situation," *is not factual and compelled me to write this article*. Town counsel was notified of issues and complaints against the superior police officer *by other people* to one Select Board member who, at the time, made the statement, "*We need to get town counsel involved*." This is factual and is when town counsel was brought in—to review and address *these issues and complaints*, and which then led to the executive session—not *my* issues, which I brought out in open Select Board sessions. The sexual harassment allegation was quickly squashed by town counsel, who said, "The whole matter amounts to no more than a tempest in a teapot."

I feel the Select Board statement is trying to cover up the main reason for town counsel's involvement—complaints by others against the superior police officer. I just want to state the facts and not be used as a scapegoat for the reason town counsel was "brought in."

—Rudy Gero

In Rememberance
Benjamin H. Vromen

Benjamin (Ben) Herbert Vromen, 93, who was beloved by family and friends for his empathy, his sense of humor, and the breadth of his intellectual interests, passed away on March 10 in Sarasota, Florida.

Ben and his wife, Suzanne, came to Monterey in 1989, purchasing a summer home not far from their permanent residence in Red Hook. Ben loved the Berkshires and for years could often be seen walking up Hupi Road, and swimming with family and friends at Lake Garfield, attending performances at Tanglewood and Jacob's Pillow. Ben is survived by his wife, his two children, their respective spouses, and a grandson, Adam Benjamin Pely.

To read the full obituary, search on Legacy.com —Editor

reconfiguration zone within a marina or a structural alteration or change in use of less than 10% in height or ground coverage for one continuous year. Finally, under the harbormaster annual permit (Section 10A exemption), only bottom-anchored rafts, floats, and moorings may be authorized locally by the town harbormaster.

For reasons of safety and public access, Chapter 91 has certain construction conditions or design standards. These conditions include: no significant interference with property owners' rights to access and egress, at least a twenty-five-foot setback wherever feasible from the abutting property lines, no impairment of the line of sight for navigation, no extension into navigation channels or beyond the length to achieve safe berthing, and the structure should not extend more than one-fourth of the way across a waterbody. When removed, seasonal docks should be stored outside of wetland resource areas, though not in bordering lands subject to flooding.

From an enforcement perspective, although the general license for projects on great ponds, navigable rivers, and streams is issued for a term of fifteen years, a certification under a general license may be voided by the DEP if the design plans are not recorded in the Registry of Deeds within sixty days of issuance. In addition, the DEP may revoke a certification for noncompliance with the standards and conditions in the general license.

For more detailed information concerning the state regulation of docks, please feel free to contact the DEP at 617-292-5500, or, concerning the Section 10A Exemption, contact the town harbormasters (Chief Gareth Backhaus, Lake Garfield, or Christopher Cobb, Lake Buel) at 528-1443, extension 225.

—Monterey Conservation Commission

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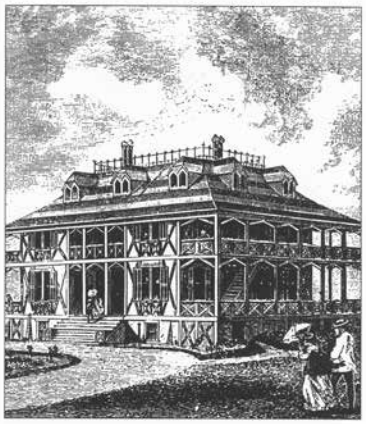
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Select Board Corner

Welcome to the Select Board Corner. We use this page each month in the *Monterey News* to keep everyone up to date on important issues, office closings, highway projects, etc. This article may be especially important for those who cannot access our website.

www.MontereyMA.gov

Our town website is a great way to access information about the town.

Meetings and events

Board of Health: Monday, April 6, at 4 p.m. Please call 528-1443 x111 to be placed on the agenda

Conservation Commission: Tuesday, April 14, at 6 p.m.

Council on Aging: Wednesdays, April 8 and 22, at 10 a.m.

Free blood pressure clinic: Berkshire VNA on Thursday, April 9, from 2 to 3 p.m.

Foot Nurse: Thursday, April 9, 9 to 11:30 a.m., by appointment (please call 528-1598). All ages are welcome.

Park Commission: Wednesday, April 1, at 6 p.m.

Planning Board: Thursdays, April 9 and 23, at 7 p.m. Please call Maggie Leonard at 528-9685 to be placed on the agenda.

Select Board meetings: Mondays, April 6 and 27, at 8:30 a.m. (administrative business from 8:30 - 9:30 a.m.) and April 13, at 4 p.m. Please call 528-1443 x111 to be placed on the agenda.

Informational Meeting: Finance Committee will host an informational meeting to discuss the monetary articles on the annual town meeting warrant at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 25, 10 a.m.in the town hall.

Annual Town Meeting: Saturday, May 2, 9:30 a.m. at the firehouse.

Town Elections: Tuesday, May 5, noon to 7 p.m.. at the firehouse.

Office/Town Hall Closings

The Town Hall will be closed on Monday, April 20, for Patriot's Day.

Individual office closings are posted on the town calendar and on the department's voicemail message.

We recommend calling ahead.

Other News

The Select Board and Finance Committee have been diligently reviewing the FY16 budget requests submitted by each department. The following is a rundown of what the Board will be putting on the annual town meeting warrant for approval:

- All elected and appointed paid positions will be given a 2% cost of living increase and the part-time police officers will be given a $2/hour raise.
- Line 141: Assessors Software will be increased by $1,484.
- Line 175: Planning Board expenses will be increased by $965 to pay for continuing education and consultations with an expert in land use planning.
- Line 197: Computer Software and Supplies will be increased by $4,000 to gradually upgrade all of the computer equipment in town hall. The proposal is to upgrade one-third of all the equipment every year.
- Line 220: (Fire Dept. expenses), line 221: (Berkshire County Sheriff dispatch service), line 240: (Bldg Dept expenses), lines 243-245: will all be increased to cover the rising costs of continuing education, office supplies, etc.
- Line 310: School capital, operating and transportation has increased by $221,560.
- Line 422: Highway Maintenance has been increased by $19,057 (reduced from the $29,057 increase requested).
- Line 429: Highway Capital has been increased by $15,000 (reduced from the $75,000 increase requested).
- Line 430: Dam Inspection and Maintenance has been increased by $5,000 to perform the clean-up work around the dam that is being enforced by DEP.
- Line 610: Library wages has increased by $7,600 to respond to the demand for increased services.
- Line 630: Park Commission has increased by $3,528 to cover rising costs associated with the operation of the beach and parks.
- Line 914: Health Insurance reflects an increase of $32,375. This includes the addition of one employee and a premium increase of 3.67%. The special article Retiree Group Health/Life Insurance was increased by $5,547 to cover the 3.67% premium increase for our five retirees. The board did look at other options available for this benefit and requested quotes from Health New England (which was unable to provide quotes for a comparable plan) and the Berkshire County Insurance Group (BCIG). Switching from MIIA (our current insurer) to BCIG and a comparable plan that they offer would save the town a total of $447.60 for the year. The total cost to the taxpayer per year to keep the plan and contributions as is increased by $24.21 for FY16. The board also looked at changing all employees to an 80/20 split (currently we have five grandfathered employees at 90/10 and threeat 80/20). This would save each taxpayer $7.44/year but would cost the five employees $1,880-$2,893 more a year.

Special Articles

- The Police Department is requesting a new 4WD cruiser for $44,218.
- The Fire Department is requesting $60,000 to replace their turnout gear as it has reached its life expectancy which the Board is going to use stabilization funds to pay for.
- The town will be performing an audit this year for $18,000.
- $10,000 is needed to begin small repairs at the Monterey School.
- There is a request for $20,000 to fund the retiree stabilization fund (up $15,000 from last year). This increase is necessary to continue to build up the fund for future retirees as well as to continue to pay for current retiree benefits.
- The final large ticket item will be a special article requesting to borrow $350,000 to upgrade the transfer station.

All other line items were either level funded or increased by minimal amounts. The total budget has increased by $335,000 from last year and leaves us $17,900 below our levy limit.

Police Department Concerns

The Select Board and chief of police developed the following summary. For the past three months the Monterey Select Board has been dealing with questions that have surfaced about our police department, both from within the department and from concerned citizens. The following is a summary of what occurred and conclusions reached.

A part-time officer in the department, displeased with a number of management issues that affected him personally and his professional relationship with the sergeant, decided to by-pass the established chain of command and bring his grievances to the Select Board. Since he has a long history with the police department, the Select Board gave him an opportunity to present his case. This was accompanied by written documentation. There was also an incident in town hall, witnessed by the sergeant, which raised concerns about an inappropriate comment that could have been viewed as sexual harassment.

Because of the potential seriousness of such a charge, the Select Board brought in town counsel to monitor and review this new situation. It is important to note that the chief has assigned most of the day-to-day operations of the part-time officers, including community policing, training, and supervision to the sergeant and thus he plays a pivotal role in both issues. Under advice from counsel, as the counsel reviewed the sexual harassment issue, the Select Board and members of the police department were asked not to discuss the ongoing review.

After conducting his review, the town counsel stated, "I am satisfied that no claim of sexual harassment is forthcoming… nor did town officials act inappropriately in requesting statements regarding the incident or in following up concerning the potential violation. The sergeant would have been justified following up on the matter. The whole matter amounts to no more than a tempest in a teapot."

During the town counsel's review, other issues were raised by some of the officers, including scheduling, who is responsible for assignments, use of vehicles, and other policy-related issues. Town counsel informed the officers that "these issues concern day-to-day operations of the police department, which are typically issues left to the chief's discretion." The Select Board agrees with these findings.

The Select Board also heard from residents and officers expressing positive and negative reviews about the policing style of the sergeant, and the Select Board agreed with the chief as to the following:

- The chief will play a greater role in training and develop a clear line of accountability between the part-time officers, the sergeant, and the chief.
- The chief will also work to identify training and learning opportunities that encourage better communication between members of the police department and the community.
- The Select Board and the chief will work to improve communication between the Select Board and the police department.
- The chief and the Select Board will develop a citizen input form.

—Wayne Burkhart, Chair
Scott Jenssen and Kenn Basler
Monterey Select Board

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Many Barred Owls, and Winter Sleepers Are Waking

March has been the month of the big birds, including turkeys, still coming around the feeders for those little seeds. Ed Salsitz and Arrie Setiawati wrote that their turkey was now able to reach up and eat directly from the feeder, having packed the deep snow with its big feet, making a solid place to stand. Lynn Leavitt called in the middle of the month to tell of a flock of twelve turkeys going across the snowy lake to a bare spot, where they stopped to feed on something, but she doesn't know what.

The small birds have been coming for seeds all winter, but in this last month several people have seen Barred Owls perching nearby, probably hoping for meat meals. Mickey Jervas called early in March to tell of a Barred Owl hunting over the snow at her place for a couple of days. She reports little holes in the snow at the end of her porch near the bird feeders, probably a sign of mice headed for the spilled seeds. Mickey saw the owl catch something in the snow and then fly off "to perch and enjoy it."

Mary Kate Jordan and Bonsai Cox wrote about a Barred Owl they'd seen at their place and about hearing one or more of them at night. John and Linda Clarke on Riverwood Way were also visited by a Barred Owl, on a tree limb about twenty feet above their birdfeeder, two evenings in a row, and Rob and Cindy Hoogs sent in a fine close-up photo of a Barred Owl

Cindy Hoogs

in their crabapple near the deck, also near the birdfeeders. They guess this owl, too, was waiting to grab a bird for lunch.

Other big birds lately include a Snowy Owl, seen by Jeff Mosher who works at the fish hatchery, and I have seen several Turkey Vultures in the second half of March. Maybe they are missing Will Marsh, who was our reliable Turkey Vulture spotter here for many years.

In the mammals department, we have an exciting report from Chuck Pierce and John Farrell, who were driving along Tyringham Road in mid-March and saw a fisher running through the woods parallel to the road, about fifty feet off. Chuck writes that they traveled along watching the fisher for about a hundred yards. Maureen Banner also reports a fisher, crossing the road where she was walking with her dog. Lynn Leavitt has seen a red fox right in front of her house, and Steve Snyder has seen a raccoon. Adam Brown saw squirrel tracks in the snow which ended abruptly, right at a place where there were wing-marks from a bird. Maybe it was one of those hungry owls.

Maureen Banner saw a coyote in the front yard early in the month, and Joe Baker saw the first chipmunk up in the woodshed right at the beginning of March. Another one of the "Seven Sleepers" is the woodchuck, and Bob Rausch saw one of these on March 13.

As I went to press, I heard this from Suzanne Sawyer: "It must be spring—the bears are back!" She says Shira saw a big bear on March 22, "in the yard, looking a little thin but as tall as ever." And another late-March sighting was a bobcat on Corashire Road. Scott Weingarten saw one at his place: "a giant cat strolling through the woods.

Thank you for your sightings!

—Bonner McAllester, 528-9385
bmca@berkshire.net

March Contributions

Thank you for your early responses to our annual fundraising letter.

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Calendar

Every Monday except holidays: Select Board meetings. See p. 20.

Every Tuesday: Chair Yoga with Connie Wilson, 9–10 a.m., Monterey Town Hall. Free, sponsored by Monterey Parks Commission.

Through Saturday, May 2: *SPACED-out-LINED,* paintings and photographs by Meryl Wilen-Greenfield, Knox Gallery, Monterey Library, see p. 7.

Sunday, April 5: Easter Egg Hunt, 1 p.m., Monterey Library. See p. 6.

Thursday, April 9:

Council on Aging, foot care clinic, 9 to 11:30 a.m., town hall meeting room. Call Maryellen Brown at 518-1598 for an appointment. People of any age are welcome. Cost is $35.

Health Promotion program with VNA, 2 to 3 p.m., town hall meeting room.

Saturday, April 11:

Gale LaScala, "Herbs for Stress," 10:30 a.m., Monterey Library. See p. 6.

Children's book group, 7 p.m., Monterey Library. See p. 9.

Wednesday, April 15: *Monterey News* deadline

Saturday, April 18:

Candidates' Forum, 10 a.m., meeting-house fellowship hall. See p. 4.

Lenox Contradance, live music by the Russet Trio, with calling by Bob Nicholson, 8 to 11:30 p.m., beginners session at 8. All dances taught. Lenox Community Center, 65 Walker St. LenoxContraDance.org. Contact 413-528-4007.

Saturday, April 25:

Ice rink take-down, 9:30 a.m. Volunteers needed.

Informational meeting, 10 a.m., town hall meeting room.Finance committee to review financial matters on town warrant.

Monday, April 27:

Adult book group, 7:30 p.m., Monterey Library. We will discuss *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand. See p.9.

Tuesday, April 28:

Sewing circle, 10-11:30 a.m., Monterey Library.

"Off Your Rocker," Council on Aging outing to Farmington Diner. See p. 6.

Saturday, May 2: Annual town meeting, begins at 9:30 a.m. at the firehouse.

Town Contact Information

Emergency! 911

Administrative Assistant:
528-1443 x111
admin@montereyma.gov
(for town boards and misc. questions)

Assessor: 528-1443 x115
assessors@montereyma.gov

Building Dept.: 528-1443 x118
buildingsafety@montereyma.gov

Fire Department (non-emergency):
528-3136
fire_service@montereyfire.org

Highway Dept.: 528-1734
mhwy@verizon.net

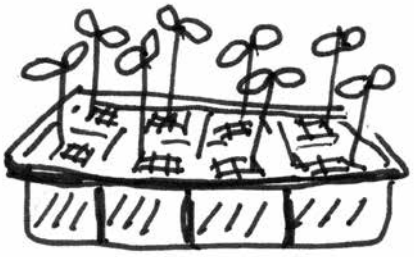
Library: 528-3795
montereylibrary@gmail.com

Police Dept. (non-emergency):
528-1443 x116,
Alternate emergency 528-3211
mpdchief@montereyma.gov

Post Office: 528-4670

Tax Collector: 528-1443 x117
montereytax@yahoo.com
(for questions about your tax bill)

Town Clerk: 528-1443 x113
clerk@montereyma.gov
(for licenses and town records)



Monterey News

The *Monterey News* is an independent nonprofit corporation dedicated to fostering communication in the Monterey community. Our editorial address is PO Box 9, Monterey, MA, 01245. We invite signed letters, articles, drawings, poetry, and photographs. Submissions may also be sent to the email address below. Address requests for advertising rates and further information to the Editor, or telephone us at 413-528-4007 or email montereynews9@gmail.com.

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Contributions from local artists this month:
Pat Arnow, pp. 3, 4, 23; George Emmons, p. 15;
Bob Horvath, p. 8; Bonner McAllester, p. 12.

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